

Crusaders tame Panthers, 67-57

Marne Madness declares 703rd BSB second to none

Sgt. Tanya Polk
Editor

The Crusaders slowed the Panthers' race through the Marne Madness Basketball Playoffs to a crawl Thursday night whipping them 67-57 at Newman Fitness Center.

Cruising though the regular season, the G Company, 703rd Base Support Battalion's Crusaders maintained their impressive record of 9 - 1 as they grasped the championship title in their victory over the 135th Quartermaster Company, Panthers.

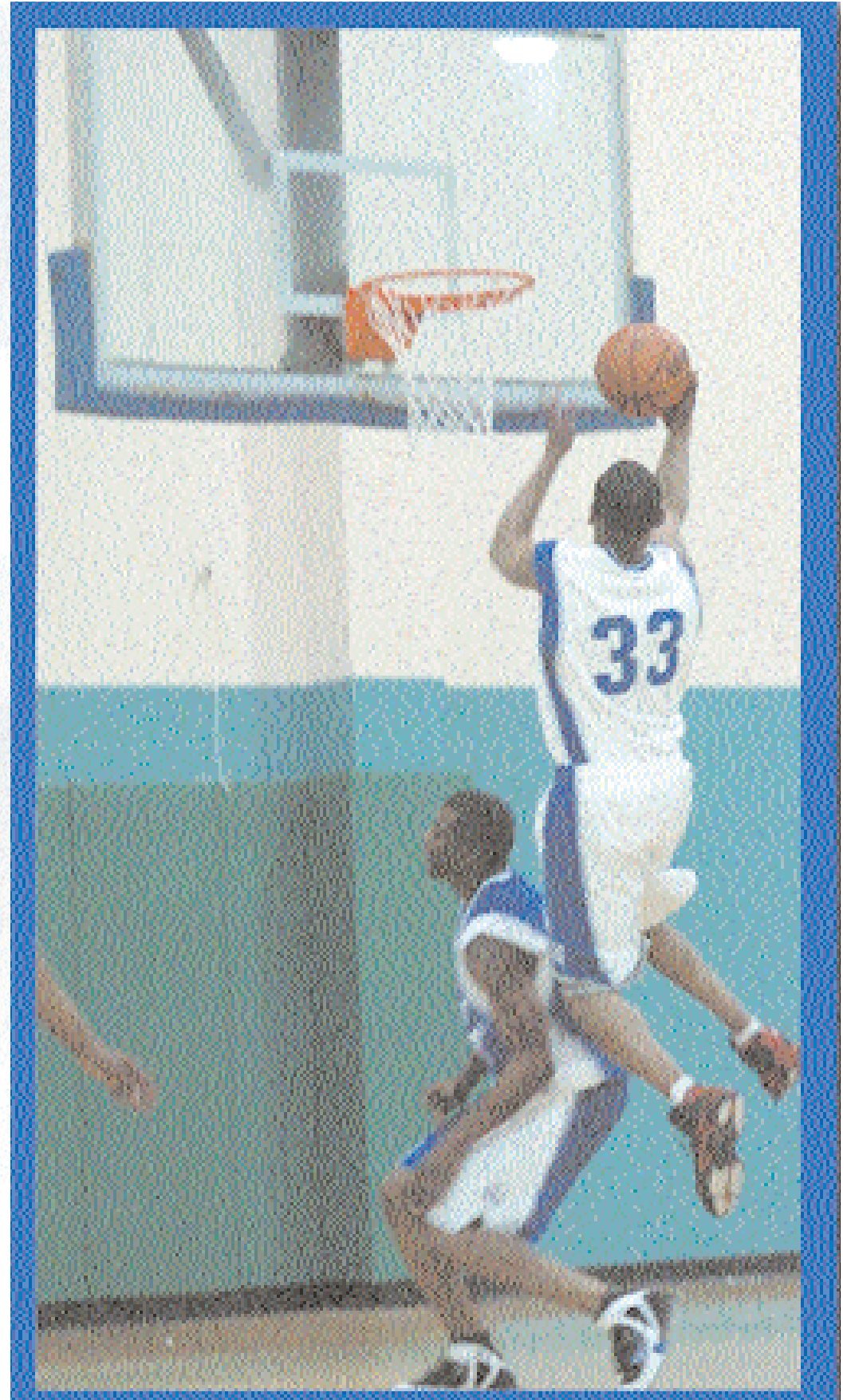
"We pretty much dominated the sea-

son," said Crusaders' coach Dean Francis. "Our first game was our only loss, but after that we pretty much dominated every team that we played."

The Crusaders' opponent had an equally competitive season record, but Panther's coach Gerald Garvey put it best when he said, "The better team won."

From the tip off, it was Crusaders' ball. The Panthers gave the Crusaders a run for their money as the beginning of the game was close-held. But, the close game only lasted so long.

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Terrance "T-Mac" Clark fast breaks to the goal to help add points to the Panthers' score.



Above: Donovan "Mitch" Mitchell, Crusaders' center, dominates the boards and kept the Panthers on their toes.



Left: Chavis "Red" Rose, guard for the Crusaders, hits a clutch three-pointer as the game got close.



Above: The sky is the limit as Tommy West, forward for the Crusaders, goes airborne and attempts to add more points to their lead.

Left: Errol Porter, Panthers' guard, makes a layup and gets the opportunity for a three-point play as Dontae Walker fouls him.

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With 1:30 left in the first half, Crusader Donovan Mitchell wowed the crowd with a powerful slam dunk and brought his team to a nine-point lead of 34-23.

The clock winded down, and the Panthers received a chance to recuperate during half time. Special to the finals, the Bradwell High School Step Team opened the half time show. The step show was followed by music from Bradwell's band.

After 20 minutes of Bradwell entertainment, it was on to the second half.

Second half scramble

Showing more energy than in the first, the Panthers made a desperate drive to come-back as guards Andrew Bogan and Terrance Clark scored a consistent four shots to give the Crusaders a marginal one-point lead of 36-35.

But their streak was soon stopped as Mitchell added two more points for the Crusaders. Mitchell, who led the Crusaders' season with 90 points, topped his 18-point average scoring 27 points – over one third of his team's final score.

"It takes skill," said Mitchell.

His skills include high school, four years of college, and street basketball.

Terrance Clark's skills gave the Panthers another chance to take the lead as his basket left them trailing by one. But, Crusaders' guard Brandon Williams hit a three-pointer and set the Panthers back once again, 51- 46.

"Coming into the game, we kind of knew most of the players, and knew what they were

capable of," Francis said.

"So, we decided prior to the game we would hold those individuals that were the high-scorers."

Mitchell said the Crusaders' strategy was to keep pressure on their opponent. The pressure was on.

Desperate measures

With less than two minutes left to play, the Panthers were desperate for possession as they fouled Mitchell not once, not twice, but three times.

Mitchell only missed one of his six free throws to give the Crusaders a 10-point lead that sent the Panthers home.

"Hard work was put in every Saturday when they could have been spending it with their families prior to deployment, to practice just for tonight, just to take home a trophy, and say that they're number one," Francis said.

"This is their moment. I'm extremely proud of all eleven of them."

Col. Todd Buchs, Fort Stewart/Hunter Army Airfield's garrison commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Charles E. Durr, Stewart/Hunter garrison command sergeant major, awarded the runner-up and champion trophies.

"It's all about the win," Mitchell said after receiving his first place trophy. "We didn't come here to lose."

"You can't mess with us," he said with a smile. "We're number one."



Cheered on by Bradwell High School’s cheerleaders, Crusaders’ guard Randall Roderick declares his teams standings prior to the Marne Madness Championship Game.

TOP PERFORMERS

Crusaders



D. Mitchell
Center, 6’3”
Points: 27

Panthers



T. Clark
Guard, 6’2”
Points: 12

Game Leaders

Crusaders

D. Mitchell, 27
T. West, 13
D. Walker, 6
B. Williams, 6
C. Rose, 5

Panthers

A. Bogan, 13
R. Johnson, 12
T. Clark, 12
E. Porter, 11
A. Vanhorn, 5

Panthers

	Total Points	Season Average
T. Clark	132	16
E. Porter	94	11
A. Bogan	72	10.2
R. Johnson	48	8
J. Ramsey	21	7

Season Leaders

Crusader

	Total Points	Season Average
D. Mitchell	90	18
T. West	84	12
R. Randall	76	10
C. Rose	45	9
A. Mack	36	9

